Website Reviews

Thinkfinity:

<http://www.thinkfinity.org/>

Thinkfinity is a website produced by Verizon. This website is a central hub for multiple resources for all areas of curriculum. The website provides teachers with free access to lesson plans, interactive sites for the students, as well as an area for 21st Century Skills. From this one website a teacher can find multiple resources for all grade levels and subject areas.

I enjoyed delving into this website. There are a lot of wonderful ideas for lessons. There were several lesson plans provided that were worthy of adapting to whatever grade level I am teaching in. There is a section for STEM. Finding lesson ideas to be able to teach science through reading and language arts is a very useful tool when combined with a hands-on inquiry lesson format. I would use the interactive links both in centers and whole group instruction to reinforce content, to engage the students, and as a fun change in teaching content. I was disappointed with the Science links in the interactive section as a majority of them would not open.

This website is very useful for teachers in all subject areas and grade levels.

Fodey.com – online newspaper clipping generator:

<http://www.fodey.com/>

This website allows you to create your own newspaper article. Once the article is created you are able to download and save it to your computer. I do appreciate that there is limited advertising on the site, there still appears to be advertising that would not be appropriate for all ages. Other newspaper clippings created by other users are not accessible. There are a few links from the site but they are similar and deal with photography. Depending on the age group this site might need to only be used by the teacher.

I would use this site in the morning meeting of a class where the students would dictate news and I can input it into the generator and then post the finished newspaper and print it for the students to keep in their language arts binder. For older students it could be used as a method of assessment. The students could create a newspaper article telling about a book, event in history or science, etc.

I believe that students could benefit from this site and that teachers can use this in multiple ways to enhance learning.

CamStudio:

<http://camstudio.org/>

This website allows a teacher to record what happens on your video screen as well as the audio. The software is free to download and use. This software can be utilized in multiple ways. I could use it to record directions for labs so that students can replay them when needed. This could be used to record everyday lessons that cover difficult content for students to review as needed, whether it be before a test or just a refresher or to help them understand a point that they didn’t grasp during class. Also, this would be an extremely useful tool for when a student is absent and missed key lessons. This is a very useful tool for any teacher to have in their toolbox.

Ask 500 People:

<http://www.ask500people.com/>

This website allows you to pose a question and people from all over the world can answer. The map will post pins of where the people who answer the question are from. The site should be monitored by the teacher. Students should not be allowed free access to this as there are some inappropriate posts for students. The site manager has posted himself that unless someone’s name and address or other personal information is used he will not remove content from the site.

This website is very interesting and could be a fun tool to explore questions brought up during discussion, or to elicit opinions about a topic. This tool could be used across the subjects. I would use this especially in social studies, science, and language arts as a tool to allow students to ask probing questions and to see how people from other cultures feel or believe on certain topics. With a multi-cultural fair, when learning about diversity, this could be used with something as simple as “What did you eat for breakfast?” There are endless possibilities with this website and can be incorporated into any subject, any grade.

Xtranormal:

<http://www.xtranormal.com/>

This website allows a user to create their own animation. A teacher or student can create a free account which will provide them with “sets” and “characters” for free. The number of sets and characters is limited with the free account. There is an educator account that the teacher can create and then pay a fee for each student per month. This account would then have access to all sets and characters. I do not believe it is necessary to pay for the extras. The students and teacher can be just as creative and resourceful with the free access account.

I would use this in multiple ways with all subject areas. For example: to provide directions for a lab, discussing a particularly difficult content area, review for an exam. Providing the students with these animations as an alternative to traditional lessons might help some students be more successful. I would also use this as an alternative assessment method. I would have my students create an animation, how they choose to create their movie, what format, would be their own choosing but they would be provided with a rubric of what must be included in the animation.